

FBI Documents on JFK Killing Raise Questions on Bullets, Oswald's Moves

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Newly disclosed FBI documents on the assassination of John F. Kennedy raise, but do not answer, questions about Lee Harvey Oswald's movements in the days before Dallas, and about the source of the bullets that killed the President.

The 597 pages of documents are the first of more than 40,000 the FBI will release Dec. 7 to comply with requests under the Freedom of Information Act for its material on the investigation of Kennedy's death in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

The first three volumes were provided to a private researcher several

months ago and were made available yesterday to the Associated Press.

The documents, many heavily censored, show that the FBI attempted to trace the fatal bullets from the time they were manufactured until they reached the assassin's hands.

Agents initially were perplexed by a piece of evidence they found.

The bullets were 6.5-millimeter Mannlicher-Carcano ammunition. Agents determined that the manufacturer was the Western Cartridge Corp. of East Alton, Ill.

Agents in Illinois examined the company's production records and found that the firm produced 4 million rounds of this type of ammunition for the U.S. Marine Corps in 1954.

"The interesting thing about this order is that it is for ammunition which does not fit and cannot be fired in any of the USMC weapons," said an FBI memo dated Dec. 2, 1963.

"This gives rise to the obvious speculation that it is a contract for ammunition placed by CIA with Western under a USMC cover for concealment purposes," the memo continued.

In other words, FBI officials speculated that the CIA was using the Marine Corps as a cover to purchase ammunition in secret.

A memo written at FBI headquarters the next day noted that the George Zucker Sales Co. of Chicago had purchased about 2 million rounds for commercial resale in 1962.

In the first batch of files released, these were the only two memos dealing with the ammunition. The material said nothing more to explain or resolve the agents' speculation. Nor was it known whether the files to be released next week, and another 40,000 pages due later, would shed more light on the question.

The Warren Commission investigated the assassination and concluded that Oswald, acting alone, killed Kennedy. The commission reported that this type of ammunition "is readily available for purchase from mail order houses as well as a few gun shops." It noted that "some 2 million rounds have been placed on sale in the United States."

The records showed that the FBI kept close watch and a voluminous file on Oswald from his defection to the Soviet Union in October, 1959, and after he returned to the United States in June, 1962.

But the bureau lost track of him for several weeks in September and October, 1963, and agents in Dallas, Little Rock and New Orleans were put on alert to locate him and his Russian-born wife, Marina.